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Hydration on Psychological Processes

This experiment tested whether individuals correct more for their presumed influence of their expectations when they have experienced evidence suggesting their expectations indeed influenced their experiences. That is, if an expectation is confirmed, this might suggest that the expectation is biasing individuals' experiences. The primary hypothesis is that the influence of the alertness expectations of drinking water and individuals beliefs about expectations will influence cognitive performance differently, depending on whether participants' other water-related expectations were confirmed. If participants expected water would make them happy (and the experiment made them happy) they should realize that expectations bias experiences. As a result, these participants should correct against the influence of their expectations regarding hydration and cognitive performance and not experience a placebo effect in cognitive performance relative to a control group who received no expectations about alertness and water. However, participants who felt happy but did not expect water to make them feel happy did not have their water expectations confirmed (they had no expectations about water and happiness). Thus, these individuals should experience placebo effects later if they do not believe expectations bias them, but will not experience placebo effects if they believe expectations bias them and correct against that bias.